

# COMMON Ground

P R E S E R V I N G   O U R   N A T I O N ' S   H E R I T A G E   W I N T E R   2 0 0 8



## *Ghosts*

*of freedom* ELLIS ISLAND'S  
LIVING LEGACY

| B Y G U S T A V O F . A R A O Z |

**WHEN WE AMERICANS TALK ABOUT** the World Heritage Convention, we are quick to point out with pride that it sprang from an American idea, that we were the first nation to ratify it, that Yellowstone National Park was the first site inscribed in the list, and that during the first 18 years of the convention, an additional 20 American sites were successfully nominated. We are right to be proud of having been instrumental in creating the most popular and widely ratified convention in the history of the world. **WORLD HERITAGE SITES** are special in that they have outstanding universal value, which is a way of saying that they have the power to stir every human being. For me, this value is more than an intellectual construct. It is an overwhelming emotional perception that I get whenever I visit a world heritage site, whether it is Machu Picchu, the Parthenon, the Medina of Fes, or the Banks of the Seine in Paris. The genius that permeates each of these magical places reminds me in its own particular way that the capacity of the human spirit is infinite, regardless of the little slot that we may occupy in our millenary trajectory. **IN THE UNITED STATES**, we are fortunate to have many sites such as this. Some are already inscribed in the world heritage list, while many others are still waiting. In the ancestral Native American lands of the Southwest, Mesa Verde National Park, Chaco Culture National Historical Park, and Taos Pueblo are more than the majestic testimony of great feats of construction and profound aesthetic sensibility. They also speak eloquently of peace interrupted by epic human conflict, of profound ties to the earth, and of the irreparable sadness in the face of paradise lost. **IN THE EAST**, Independence Hall, Mount Vernon, and Jefferson's Monticello inspire us with awe for the eternal human search for a utopia where the spirit can soar. The miracle that so much talent could exist at one time in one place, and that it could then converge to create the American Republic, remains unfathomable. These places drive home the universal message that when faced with great adversity, one must act decisively and with honesty. **AS AN IMMIGRANT AND A NATURALIZED AMERICAN**, the Statue of Liberty is the U.S. world heritage site that speaks most eloquently to me, even though my personal immigration on a regularly scheduled Pan Am flight from Havana to Miami, in 1960, lacks the drama and

pathos of the halls of Ellis Island. I harbor no illusions that Miami International Airport—my personal Ellis Island—will ever be added to the world heritage list. This is because in spite of this personal connection, the authenticity and integrity of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island pack an emotional punch far more powerful. The little island in New York harbor—the place of so much suffering and joy, desperation and hope, gratitude and regret—is emblematic of the emotional baggage that every immigrant carries for life. **THERE IS INHERENT VALUE IN** all cultural sites, but rarely do they rise to the level of the world heritage list. The United States boasts dozens of places that speak eloquently to the universal condition, and of American

**// There is inherent value in all cultural sites, but rarely do they rise to the level of the world heritage list. The United States boasts dozens of places that speak eloquently to the universal condition, and of American contributions that—for better and sometimes for worse—have changed the planet. //**

contributions that—for better and sometimes for worse—have changed the planet. They range from humble places where the spark of a simple idea changed the world, to devices that broke the bounds of Earth itself and deposited men on the Moon. **THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST** brings a new excitement and opportunity. It is a chance to engage the international community, to invite people the world over to witness the American experience and its impact on humanity. The tentative list of U.S. sites recently nominated for inscription on the list is a small but significant step in the right direction to ensure that these outstanding places will get the global recognition they deserve.

Gustavo F. Araoz is President of the International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS).





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**Front:** A long look down Corridor 9, on Island 3, what photographer Stephen Wilkes calls the "spinal cord" of Ellis Island's south side.

© STEPHEN WILKES

**Back:** Artifact of Carl Sandburg's early career selling stereograph images and viewers, with the poet pictured. CAROL HIGSMITH FOR THE NPS MUSEUM MANAGEMENT PROGRAM, CARL 10901

# BEACON OF HOPE

## MIAMI'S NEWLY LANDMARKED TREASURE FACES A BRIGHT FUTURE

Ellis Island might be the most famous entryway to America, but Miami boasts a more recent chapter in the immigration story, whose ramifications are still rippling today. From 1962 to 1974, thousands of exiled Cubans passed through its refugee center, the Freedom Tower, on their way to a life free of communism. Designated a national historic landmark in October, the tower was recently gifted to Miami Dade College by the city's Cuban-American Martin family. The institution plans to turn at least part of what college president Eduardo Padrón calls a "public treasure" into a museum to commemorate the city's Cuban heritage. "They are the perfect custodian," says Becky Roper Matkov, CEO of Dade Heritage Trust, a local preservation group.

Tower, it features a copper weather vane, a mural of an Old World navigational map, and a bas-relief depiction of Queen Isabella of Spain. It's a classic beauty amidst the modern glass-sheathed skyscrapers downtown.

Padrón says the college wants

**SCHULTZE AND WEAVER, A PROMINENT NEW YORK ARCHITECTURE FIRM, DESIGNED THE EDIFICE—BUILT IN 1925 FOR THE MIAMI NEWS, A NOW DEFUNCT NEWSPAPER.** MODELED AFTER SEVILLE'S GIRALDA TOWER, IT FEATURES A COPPER WEATHER VANE, A MURAL OF AN OLD WORLD NAVIGATIONAL MAP, AND A BAS-RELIEF DEPICTION OF QUEEN ISABELLA OF SPAIN. IT'S A CLASSIC BEAUTY AMIDST THE MODERN GLASS-SHEATHED SKYSCRAPERS DOWNTOWN.

to honor not only its architecture, but its history. Only the lower floors are currently open to the public but eventually Miamians will get a chance to go all the way to the top.

"It points to the sky and says that here, in this country, you are free to pursue your dreams," Padrón says. "That's why we call it the Freedom Tower. And why we can't just let it disappear."

Matkov says her group is happy the cupola-topped structure finally has an owner with a real use. Although intermittently a banquet hall after a 1988 renovation, the place had a hard time attracting business, often left vacant and vandalized. It's in good shape again, thanks to a restoration in 2000, even weathering the threat of being dwarfed by a proposed 62-story condo next door.

The tower earned its reputation as the "Ellis Island of the South" after Fidel Castro's 1959 rise to power. Thousands of desperate Cubans sought asylum in the United States. At the peak of immigration in 1962, over 1,800 arrived weekly, until the Cuban Missile Crisis put a halt to it. The exodus resumed when Castro opened the doors to anyone with relatives outside of Cuba. Between 1965 and 1973, flights into Miami brought over a quarter million Cubans.

The Freedom Tower helped with medical care, surplus food, resettlement assistance, and monthly stipends. "A material and emotional refuge" is how Robert Chisholm, a Miami architect who migrated with his family as a boy, recalls it. As the Freedom Tower's national historic landmark nomination points out, it was the height of the Cold War, and America considered assistance critical in the name of democracy. "As a result," says the nomination, "the Cuban exodus was viewed unlike any previous wave of immigration." It is a migration that continues today, with 20,000 Cubans allowed into the country legally per year, and no shortage of applicants.

Schultze and Weaver, a prominent New York architecture firm, designed the edifice—built in 1925 for the *Miami News*, the city's first newspaper, published for 92 years starting in 1896. Modeled after Seville's Giralda

For more information, contact the Dade Heritage Trust at (305) 358-9572, visit the Miami Dade College website at [www.mdc.edu](http://www.mdc.edu), or call (305) 237-8888. Read the NHL nomination online at [www.nps.gov/history/nhl/designations/samples/fl/FreedomTower.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/history/nhl/designations/samples/fl/FreedomTower.pdf).

**Right: The Freedom Tower, Miami's former immigration center, was just designated a national historic landmark. The city's Cuban-American Martin family gifted it to Miami Dade College, which plans to turn at least part of it into a museum.**









**"IT TOOK GOING OUT WITH THE**

# Native Secrets

Report Sheds Light on an Indian Past in the Colorado Rockies

**A CENTURY AND A QUARTER AFTER THE UTE INDIANS WERE FORCED FROM** the Rocky Mountains by the U.S. government, the blurred story of their ancient presence has become a little clearer thanks to a recent report commissioned by the National Park Service.

Sally McBeth, anthropology department chair at the University of Northern Colorado, wrote the report for Rocky Mountain National Park after years of research and dozens of interviews with tribal members as they explored the spiritual beliefs, survival practices, and folktales of their ancestors. “It took going out with the elders to see that the park wasn’t just a pristine landscape,” McBeth says. Scattered among the 265,000 acres of wildflowers, ponderosa pine, and snow-covered peaks are the remains of many archeological sites.

“The mountains are high places where you can connect, peacefully, with the spiritual,” said Neil Buck Cloud in his retelling of the Bear Dance Story, about a Ute who falls in love with a bear and then becomes one himself. There is a mystic sense in every tale, like the story of a slave woman’s journey back to her family following the North Star through the Rockies, hallucinating along the way that a skeleton has given her food and shelter. Every event has a purpose,

the deer, the buffalo, and all the animals and plants that are here,” said Loya Arrum, a Northern Ute. The Ute roamed the Rockies for hundreds of years, hunting the slopes and wintering in the valleys, before being sent to distant reservations after the Meeker Massacre in 1879. Nathan Meeker, an agent at the White River Indian Agency, was slain with several other men after he aggressively tried to convert angered tribe members into farmers. In the aftermath, newspapers started the slogan “The Utes Must Go!” The southern bands were sent southwest towards the four corners area of Colorado, while the northern bands were evicted from the state entirely. It’s a past that hasn’t been forgotten.

**“VALUABLE ON MANY LEVELS,” WAS HOW MCBETH DESCRIBED WHAT SHE** learned, since there isn’t much documentation of the Ute prior to their departure. Today, 125 years later, she found that ties to the park were in many ways severed. Only one tribal member had visited. But many wanted to rekindle the lost memories. “They were really interested in reconnecting with the park’s sacred sites,” McBeth says. A few resisted returning for any reason, but there was the sense that if they did not “all those connections would be lost to the next generation,” she says. Added Arrum, “Very little is known of our people and so

## ELDERS TO SEE THAT THE PARK WASN’T JUST A PRISTINE LANDSCAPE,”

MCBETH SAYS. SCATTERED AMONG THE 265,000 ACRES OF WILDFLOWERS, PONDEROSA PINE, AND SNOW-COVERED PEAKS ARE THE REMAINS OF MANY ARCHEOLOGICAL SITES.

telling of origins or offering morals, often through animals and their environment. “In English, God, you call him God, but in Ute it’s nature,” said Geneva Accawanna, a Northern Ute.

McBeth also learned about the Little People, dwarves underground who possess extraordinary spiritual power, always deserving of respect. “They’re just our leprechauns,” explained Alden Naranjo, a Southern Ute who was among 25 members of the Ute and the Arapaho—former mountain neighbors—that McBeth interviewed as they walked their ancestral land, pointing out rock circles and fasting beds used for vision quests and healing rituals, conical-shaped wooden wickiups used for temporary shelters, and the routes of game drives used for hunting. “For the Ute people, it was a paradise—the grass, lush meadows, the lodge poles, the elk,

**Left: Abandoned Ute teepees, circa 1880-1910.**

it’s time for us to tell the world that we have been in these mountains a long time . . . [it is time] to open the windows and the doors.”

Former park archeologist William Butler says the report, inspired in part by University of Colorado anthropology professor John Brett’s earlier ethnographic assessment, was especially useful in giving the park the background it needs to protect the sacred sites. And thanks to the tribes, visitors will have a deeper understanding of the full story, with the park’s interpretation informed by the report.

Read the report at [www.nps.gov/history/history/online\\_books/romo/oral\\_history.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/history/history/online_books/romo/oral_history.pdf). Email Sally McBeth at [sally.mcbeth@unco.edu](mailto:sally.mcbeth@unco.edu).



# A MILLION ACRES OF SKY

A LEGENDARY LIFE ON VIEW AT CARL SANDBURG'S COUNTRY RETREAT

American writer Carl August Sandburg was a man of many questions, including the oft-asked query of time and self, "Who am I, where am I going, where have I been?" And now, thanks to a new web exhibit from the National Park Service Museum Management Program, objects from the place where he made some of his most iconic ponderings are on virtual display. Clothing, furniture, photographs, and mementos—all from Connemara, the Flat Rock, North Carolina, farm where Sandburg lived with his wife Lilian ("Paula") Steichen Sandburg and daughters from 1945 until his death in 1967—can be viewed up close with insights from his philosophies and writings.



EDWARD STEICHEN. "THE SANDBURG FAMILY," CARL 12701



Far left: The close-knit Sandburg family, circa 1920s. Near left: Cover detail from Carl Sandburg's 1953 autobiography, *Always the Young Strangers*. Right: Cover of the *Chicago Tribune Magazine of Books*, with scenes from Sandburg's early life.

**SANDBURG WAS BORN IN GALESBURG, ILLINOIS, THE ELDEST SON OF SWEDISH immigrants, in 1878.** He lived most of his life in the Midwest, with only the last 22 years spent in North Carolina. But for anyone wanting a sense of who he was, Connemara—a national historic landmark—is the place to go, or experience through the web. Although only around 400 of its over 300,000 objects are online, they are a tangible record of the Sandburgs' daily lives, left as they were in 1968 when Paula sold the house to the National Park Service. "Magical," is how Sandburg biographer Penelope Niven describes the estate. With its wall-to-wall bookcases and thousands of letters and papers, "you truly know that you have entered a writer's workshop," she says.

From the early 1900s, when he was a newspaper editor at Galesburg's Lombard College, Sandburg was prolific. Over a third of his published works, including *Remembrance Rock* and several revisions of earlier titles, were written in the upstairs study, where he spent long hours in the leather swivel chair at his Remington typewriter. Papers are scattered about the room—he saved nearly everything—with numerous items stored in orange crates. "Visitors see a

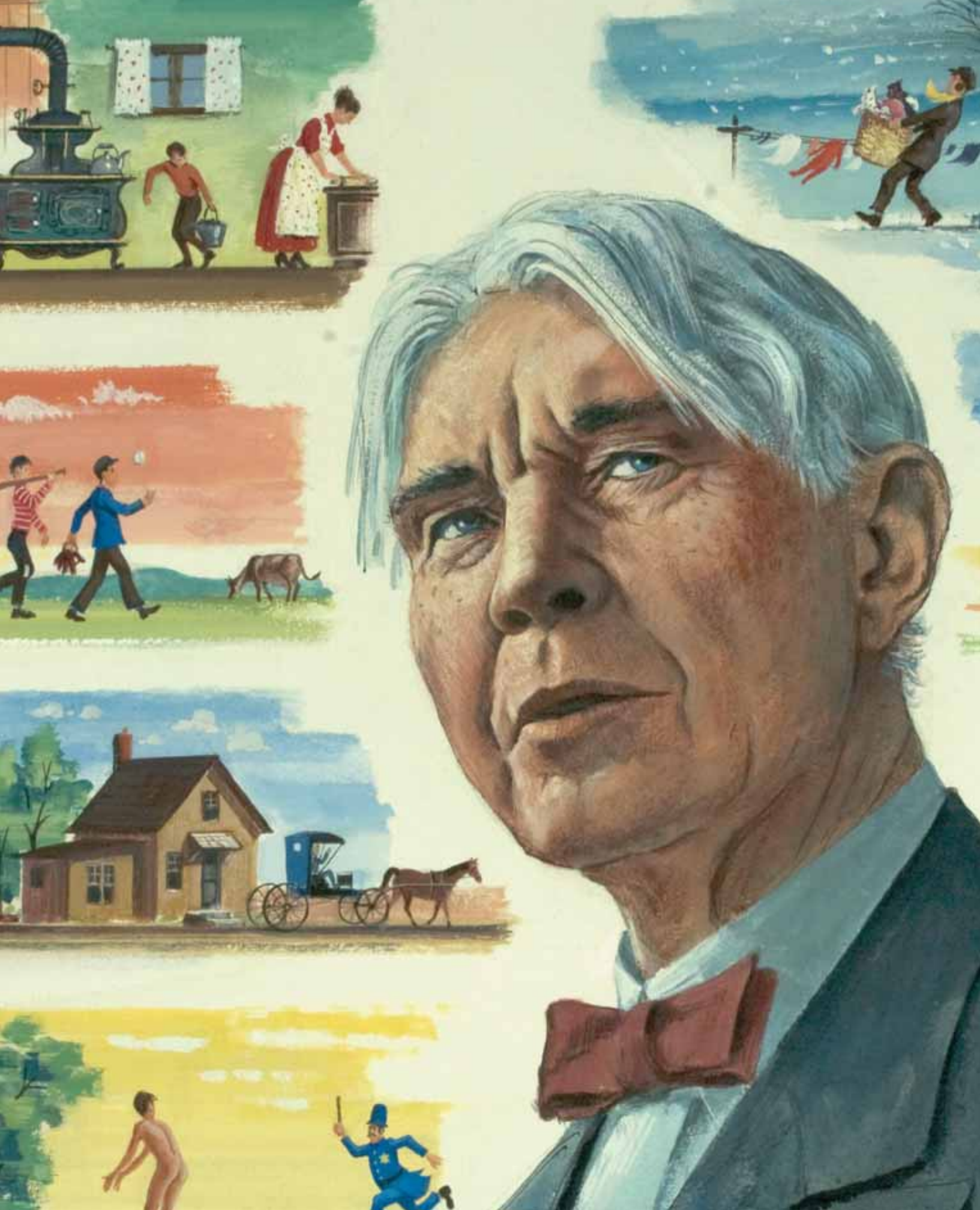
ABOVE "ALWAYS THE YOUNG STRANGERS," CARL 20410, RIGHT "CARL SANDBURG PORTRAIT W/ COLLAGE," CARL 26796

lot of disorder and confusion, but he very clearly had things in an order that worked for him," Niven says, adding that she uses some of his techniques in organizing her own writing.

**SANDBURG AND HIS WIFE PAULA, BOTH FIRST-GENERATION AMERICANS,** struggled to get by in the early years. Décor was unimportant. A "shack in the woods with a roof, four walls, three chairs (one for company), a hat rack, a bread box, and a bowl for wild flowers and a coffeepot," were all the couple wanted after their 1908 wedding, wrote their granddaughter, Paula Steichen, in her 1969 childhood memoir, *My Connemara*. And while the three-story Greek Revival edifice is definitely not a shack, it exudes simplicity.

"If it was functional and pretty, they put it in the house," says Sarah Perschall, the site's chief of visitor services, pointing to the mismatched dining room chairs as an example of comfort over style. While brand names were never important, quality was. The house boasts several pieces of handmade Stickley furniture, and although expensive, they reflect Sandburg's belief in hard work—the fuel that carried him through life.







# THE AMERICAN SONGBAG

280 real American songs to sing and play. Ballads, hobo songs, spirituals, steamboat, railroad and lumberjack songs, close harmony ditties, colonial songs, love songs . . .

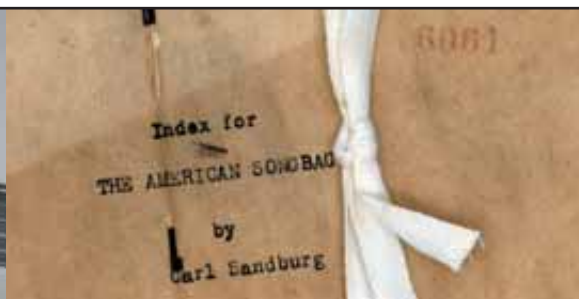




**AS A CHILD LABORER WHO NEVER WENT TO HIGH SCHOOL, WHAT SANDBURG** didn't have in his youth he made up for with his later ambition. He fought in the Spanish-American War and hoboed around the country selling stereograph images and viewers before getting serious as a writer in the early 1900s. Success didn't find him until the 1930s, though people took notice of his free verse poetry on the struggles of immigrants and the working class. "I wish to God I had never saw you, Mag. I wish to God the kids had never come," were the words about a man unable to support his family. "It was strong, muscular poetry about real people with real problems," Niven says. Much of the inspiration came from his early days as a labor reporter, his

"Many visitors don't realize the scope of his work," Perschall says. He also published children's stories, fiction, and biographies, including his own, *Always the Young Strangers*.

**SANDBURG WAS OFTEN AWAY ON WORK-RELATED TRAVEL, BUT WHEN HE WAS** at Connemara, one of his favorite hobbies was music. He loved hearing classical records on the phonograph, but could just as well be found with his silver Chromonica harmonica or one of several guitars strumming a folk song. "A small friend weighing less than a newborn infant, ever responsive to all sincere efforts aimed at mutual respect, depth of affection or love gone off the deep end," was one of several definitions Sandburg had for his musical instru-



"bread and butter" job for the *Chicago Daily News*, where he witnessed firsthand the working conditions of the Industrial Revolution. Moved strongly by its travesties, he joined the Socialist Democratic Party, where he argued for an eight-hour work day, a minimum wage, and unemployment insurance. His politics grew from the experiences of his father, a Swedish immigrant who struggled to make ends meet. In 1919—at the height of the Red Scare—Sandburg documented the Chicago race riots and labor unrest, establishing his reputation as an advocate for the common man. The suffering of World War I influenced his views, as well. According to Niven, he had come to believe that "the struggle for human dignity was global, and his conviction deepened that the insidious root of racial, national, and international conflict was economic."

He was part of what came to be known as the Chicago Literary Renaissance, about a decade's worth of influential work by writers such as Theodore Dreiser, Sherwood Anderson, Edgar Lee Masters, and others. It was a period when theater and literary magazines flourished in the city. Writers lamented the loss of traditional rural values and life in an industrial America that seemed increasingly preoccupied with material possessions. Their gritty, realistic depictions of the urban milieu fostered a literary form of newspaper reporting, for which Sandburg became well known.

**"A SMALL FRIEND WEIGHING LESS THAN A NEWBORN INFANT, EVER RESPONSIVE TO ALL SINCERE EFFORTS AIMED AT MUTUAL RESPECT, DEPTH OF AFFECTION OR LOVE GONE OFF THE DEEP END," WAS ONE OF SEVERAL DEFINITIONS** SANDBURG HAD FOR HIS MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

ments. He bought his first guitar at the age of 32. Knowing only a few chords, he was not a strong player, but could "hold an audience transfixed when he sang," says Niven.

His intense love of folk music inspired him to publish *The American Songbag*, a 280-song collection of his favorite folk ballads, in 1927. "Real American" songs was how he described it. Like many first-generation immigrants, Sandburg wholeheartedly embraced assimilation, even calling himself Charles for several years, before returning to the more Swedish Carl, so folk culture was especially appealing to him.

A night owl, he often slept late, awakened with a breakfast tray from daughter Janet. He wouldn't start writing until afternoon, but

**Left: Sandburg's collection of folk music, a cultural portrait of early 20th century America. Above: The writer's guitar and index cards from his *American Songbag* research.**



when he did, he demanded quiet. Other members of the family could often be found outside, particularly in another hub of activity—the goat dairy in the barn. The family never drank cow’s milk again once Paula, who suffered from gall bladder problems, found that goat milk was easier to digest, and just as delicious. Her prize-winning herd, named Chikaming, produced milk for sale until 1952, when the state decided that it must be pasteurized. At its peak in the early 1950s, the operation had over 200 champion Nubian, Toggenburg, and Saanen goats. Jennifer II, a Toggenburg, was the world’s top producer for the breed in 1960. Not only did the goats win awards for their milk production, they excelled in the show ring, too. Around 15 of them, descendants of the original herd, still roam the barnyard.

Paula, who studied genetics at the University of Chicago before getting married, wanted to improve milk quality and production in the industry. She became an advocate for scientific breeding and research, serving for 20 years as director of the American Dairy Goat Association. On many Connemara evenings, she could be found at her desk in the barn, hunched over a spiral notebook, scribbling

notes about lineages or working on articles for *Better Goatkeeping* and *Goat World*.

**BUILT IN 1838, THE 245-ACRE ESTATE WAS THE HOME OF C.G. MEMMINGER, A** prominent Charleston lawyer and the Confederacy’s Secretary of the Treasury during the Civil War, before passing through a handful of owners. One of them, Captain Ellison Smyth, named it Connemara after his ancestral Ireland. The Sandburgs purchased it for \$45,000, to escape the cold Midwestern winters and find much needed privacy. “They loved their house in Michigan but they were international celebrities and it was very regular for people to just walk right up to their door,” Niven says.

Paula called it “a million acres of sky.” Carl said it was “a hell of a baronial estate for an old Socialist.” With its 22-room main house, barns for the goats, lakes, and a network of nature trails, Connemara offered the family plenty of space. It also boasted a view of the Blue Ridge Mountains and an expanse of flat rocks where Sandburg loved to muse. “The spectacular natural beauty gave tremendous inspiration,” says a report for the site published by the National Park Service Southeast Regional Office in 2005.





LEFT ABOVE "GOAT MILK BOTTLE CAP," CARL 107139; LEFT "PURSE," CARL 107898; ABOVE "TOY," CARL 54090

When Carl wasn't writing or traveling on business, and Paula wasn't out in the barn with the goats, the family enjoyed just being together. Bird watching was a favorite family pastime. Web viewers can see their love of the feathered creatures in exhibit items such as oldest daughter Margaret's bird-illustrated wooden purse and a colorful Swedish tile stating simply "Happy as a bird in the early morning." As Paula once said, "They are our luxury!"

The Sandburgs were avid readers, Carl and Margaret especially. There is an extraordinary library—with over 15,000 titles—including childhood texts and books on just about every topic. Although over 6,000 of the volumes were sold to the University of Illinois in 1956, visitors can see the remaining thousands in the custom bookcases lining the walls of nearly every room. More than 3,000 titles relate to Abraham Lincoln.

**THE FORMER PRESIDENT WAS AT THE HEART OF SANDBURG'S CAREER.** THE writer once said of him: "Not often in the story of mankind does a man arrive on earth who is both steel and velvet, who is hard as a rock and soft as a drifting fog, who holds in his heart and mind the paradox of terrible storm and peace unspeakable and perfect."

**BIRD WATCHING WAS A FAVORITE FAMILY PASTIME. WEB VIEWERS CAN SEE THEIR LOVE OF THE FEATHERED CREATURES IN EXHIBIT** ITEMS SUCH AS OLDEST DAUGHTER MARGARET'S BIRD-ILLUSTRATED WOODEN PURSE AND A COLORFUL SWEDISH TILE STATING SIMPLY "HAPPY AS A BIRD IN THE EARLY MORNING."

**Left:** Objects from the collection of the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site: The cap to a bottle of goat milk and a detail from a wooden purse belonging to the poet's daughter, Margaret. **Above:** A folk art toy.

From his Illinois childhood, Sandburg had been intrigued by the man, visiting the site of a Lincoln-Douglas debate and shining the shoes of Civil War veterans. He spent several years writing the two-volume *Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years*. Published in 1926, the biography was a success before it hit the printing press, with over 10,000 advance sets sold. While some critics deemed it unconventional and not always factual, for the most part it earned rave reviews. He followed with the equally impressive *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years*, published in 1939. He avidly collected Lincoln memorabilia—including a book of photos of the president, privately published in 1911—and a Civil War-era certificate with

Lombard professor). The two collaborated on several projects including the 1955 Museum of Modern Art exhibit “The Family of Man,” a legendary collection of over 500 images from 68 countries.

An extremely popular figure, Sandburg had many admirers. The house is filled with many unique and varied gifts, from the prized North Star Medal from Sweden’s King Gustav VI Adolf to a miniature rhododendron wood log cabin created by a Flat Rock local. The home also contains the formal recognitions of his accomplishments—countless awards and honors. Many, such as his first Pulitzer Prize in 1940 and his 1960 Grammy, were for his work on Lincoln. Engraved on the back of one Lincoln-related award, a

## “MAGICAL,” IS HOW SANDBURG BIOGRAPHER PENELOPE NIVEN DESCRIBES AND THOUSANDS OF LETTERS AND PAPERS, “YOU TRULY KNOW THAT YOU HAVE ENTERED A WRITER’S WORKSHOP,” SHE SAYS.



“PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM,” CARL 18042



“LINCOLN PLAQUE,” CARL 30267

**Above left: Sandburg’s Presidential Medal of Freedom, given by President Lyndon Johnson in 1964. Above right: Plaque honoring the poet’s work on Abraham Lincoln, which included a Pulitzer Prize-winning biography. Right: At work in Chicago.**

Abe’s signature. The president’s image was all over the house. Granddaughter Paula thought he was a relative she had never met.

The web exhibit also gives a glimpse of Sandburg’s daughters, his “homeyglomeys.” Margaret, who had epilepsy, and Janet, who had mental disabilities, always lived with their parents. Helga, a writer herself, lived at Connemara for several years with her two young children before remarrying and moving to Virginia. Viewers can see a painted drum from Margaret’s oriental art collection, some of middle daughter Janet’s animal figurines including her porcelain Siamese cat, and youngest daughter Helga’s paintings of her father.

**FRIENDS AND FAMILY WERE IMPORTANT, AND SANDBURG WASN’T THE ONLY** famous one. Web viewers can see the portraits taken by Paula’s brother, noted pictorialist photographer Edward Steichen. Sandburg called him his third great influence (after Paula and a

metal plaque manufactured by the Medallion Art Company, are the words “WGN greatly acknowledges your contribution of the continuing tradition and spirit of the Lincoln story . . . New York World’s Fair, 1964-1965.”

**SANDBURG HIMSELF WAS THE RECIPIENT OF THE PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF Freedom**, given by President Johnson in 1964. But perhaps the honor he loved best was that schools were named after him. The virtual tour includes a commemorative plate from a Carl Sandburg High School and a pencil bag and jacket from a Carl Sandburg Junior High.

Photographs of the poet at Connemara show a man unaltered by acclaim. Sandburg wears rumpled work clothes, a handkerchief around his neck, his longish white hair hanging low on his forehead. The homey clutter, the folk objects, and the unassuming furniture suggest that no matter how far he traveled—both literally and figuratively—he never strayed far from what he perceived himself to be, a common man. As a result, Connemara is a place many people relate to. “Visitors quickly develop an affection for the site,” says Superintendent Connie Hudson Backlund. “It might be remembrances of their childhood kitchen or their grandparent’s house; the objects rekindle memories that make you feel right at home.”

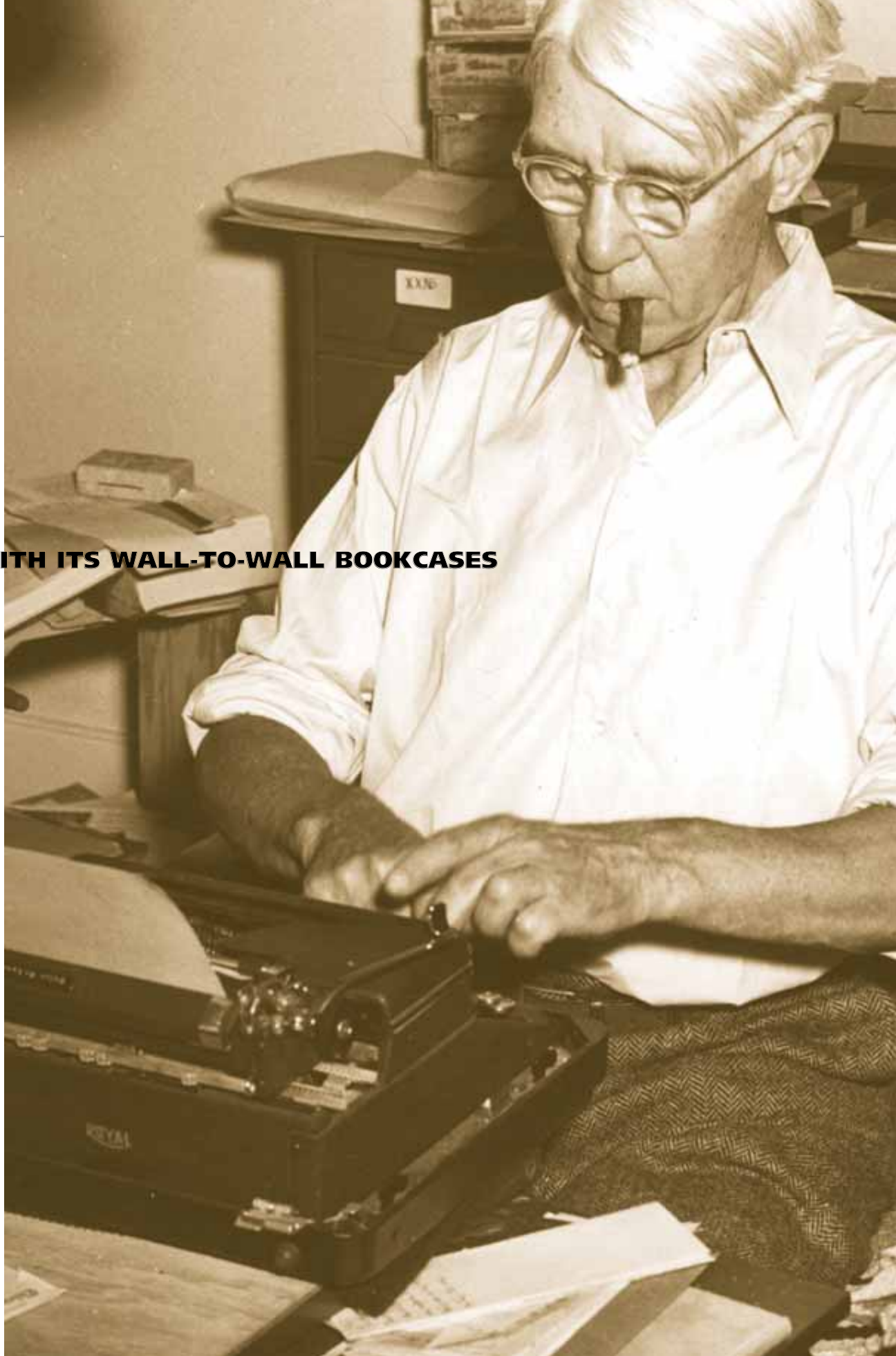
Sandburg was never forgotten in his lifetime, not just for his Lincoln writings and poetry, but also for his role as an advocate for social change. Niven says his life is a lesson we can learn from today. “He found so much to celebrate, even in hard times,” she says.

Check out the online exhibit at <http://www.nps.gov/history/museum/exhibits/carl>. Viewers can also see a timeline of Sandburg’s life and slideshows of family photos, as well as access *Teaching with Museum Collections* lesson plans. For information about visiting Connemara, go to [www.nps.gov/carl](http://www.nps.gov/carl) or call (828) 693-4178.



**THE ESTATE. WITH ITS WALL-TO-WALL BOOKCASES**

JUNE GLENN. "CARL SANDBURG TYPING IN HIS UPSTAIRS OFFICE AT CONNEMARA," CARL 2662



# Ghosts of freedom

*ELLIS ISLAND'S LIVING LEGACY* BY JOE BAKER WITH PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEPHEN WILKES

On the grey afternoon of November 28, 1911, four young men in their early 20s hoist their bags on their shoulders and step down the gangway from the dock onto the ferry *Ellis Island*, bound for Jersey City from the immigration center. They are all from a pair of tiny adjoining villages in the mountainous Abruzzo region of central Italy. They are smiling because the brutal week of seasickness crowded among the almost 2,000 third-class passengers aboard the *Santa Anna* is over. They are also happy because they've all made it through the screening process and been given permission to enter the country. A door has opened, and a new world lies beyond.

**Right: "A doorway to a jungle," is how photographer Stephen Wilkes remembers this image along Corridor 9. "Of all the images I captured here on Ellis Island, none so epitomizes nature's triumph."**

ALL PHOTOS COPYRIGHT STEPHEN WILKES EXCEPT AS NOTED











**THEIR HAPPINESS IS TEMPERED BY MORE THAN A LITTLE ANXIETY. NONE OF** them speaks English. They each have the equivalent of less than 20 American dollars, a bag of clothing and personal items, and the clothes on their backs. All of them are recently married, and they are an ocean away from their loved ones and everything familiar. They have been told that if they can make their way to a place called Harrisburg, in the nearby state of Pennsylvania, they stand a good chance of finding work with the railroad. One of the four, Giuseppe DiRado, a quiet fellow remarkable for his stature (nearly six feet tall at a time when most of his countrymen were quite a bit shorter), and for his love of poetry and the outdoors, leans pensively on the railing of the ferry as it makes the short traverse to Jersey. He looks beyond the soaring statue with the torch toward the open Atlantic, through the narrows that bear the name of his countryman Giovanni da Verrazzano, and thinks of his young wife and infant daughter. He feels the weight of his decision to come here sitting on his shoulders like a sack of wet sand. So much is riding on this.

Today, on a grand October morning, I too leave the cramped confines of the ferry and walk up the gangway to the dock on Ellis Island. I move away from the throng of 600 or so fellow passengers heading to the Immigration Museum, and walk toward the old Ferry Building, toward a shape protruding from the water. The object caught my eye as we came into the slip, and since I had read most of a National Park Service report on the train to New York that morning, I knew what I was looking at. I stood by myself at the edge of the dock and gazed down at the mostly submerged hull of the ferry *Ellis Island*, which sank at her moorings in 1968. Despite the beautiful morning, and my buoyant mood at being in the bustle of the greatest city in the world, I was nearly overcome by emotion. The rotting hulk connects me directly to that young man lost in uncertain reflection upon her deck almost a century ago. He and I were very close when I was a kid, especially after the early death of my father. Giuseppe was my grandfather.

My connection in turn connects me with approximately 40 percent of my fellow citizens. In response to steadily increasing immigration through much of the 19th century, and to the discord of immigration being handled by the individual states, the federal government established the first national immigration center in New York in 1890. President Harrison's administration chose a small island near the New Jersey side of the harbor that had been by turns a Native American encampment, a haunt of colonial fishermen and pirates, and part of the harbor's defensive works. The island was enlarged with fill, and a complex of wood frame buildings was erected named for the 18th century owner Samuel Ellis. The immigration center opened in 1892, welcoming its first newcomer, a 15-year-old Irish girl named Annie Moore, with pomp, publicity, and a \$10 coin. For the approximately 12 million immigrants who followed her, the welcome could be dramatically less warm, but for more than six decades, Ellis Island was the gateway through which a great many American families arrived. It changed us profoundly.

**NONE OF THOSE ORIGINAL WOODEN BUILDINGS IS VISIBLE NOW. IN JUNE OF** 1897, a catastrophic fire erased them from the landscape, taking with it many of the immigration center's earliest paper records. Congress authorized funding later that year for several new, fireproof buildings. The New York firm of Boring and Tilton designed the imposing and graceful complex of Beaux-Arts structures that greets visitors today. The new immigration station's main building opened in 1900, with additional ones opening as late as 1915. The station operated at its peak for a little over two decades, as huge waves of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe entered the



United States. In 1924, with changes in immigration law, immigration processing became the responsibility of individual American consulates in the countries of origin, and only new arrivals who were ill, or arriving under unusual circumstances, or whose paperwork was not in order passed through the complex. After the legislation passed, Ellis Island saw some use as a Coast Guard training facility, a hospital for returning veterans from the Second World War, and an internment camp for enemy aliens, slowly declining until its eventual closing in 1954. President Johnson recognized the facility's role in our heritage by declaring Ellis Island a part of Statue of Liberty National Monument in 1965, placing it in the care of the National Park Service. By that time, the roughly 35 buildings were already badly weathered, with no funds for preservation.

**Left: Abandoned room in the former psychiatric hospital on Island 2. Top: An anonymous immigrant with a B&O railroad tag at Ellis Island in 1900. Above: Quarantined patient reads a paper.**

**AS THE STATUE OF LIBERTY'S CENTENNIAL APPROACHED, A NONPROFIT, THE Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation, was formed in 1982 to support the restoration of both units of the national monument. Through a partnership with the foundation, and the completion of a management plan (also in 1982), a vision for the island's future began to take shape. While it has undergone several iterations, that vision has always included the preservation, rehabilitation, and re-use of at least some of the facilities. During the centennial celebration in 1990, a part of the vision was realized in the re-opening of the main building as the Ellis Island Immigration Museum.**

It's an impressive place. The ground floor, originally the baggage room, features objects and exhibits that explain the immigrant's story. It also contains the History Center, where I was able to view my grandfather's records in an electronic database. But for me, it was the second floor that was most evocative. At the top of the steps is a vast and open tiled room. Light spills in from enormous windows. While it is usually



BETTMANN/CORBIS

full of visitors, it is also quiet, like a church. This is the registry room. This is where new arrivals awaited their inspection and interview by immigration inspectors, where they answered the questions about their health, their families, their means, their places of origin, and their destinations. This is where their hopes and fears mingled, where their futures were decided by strangers. I walked the room's length, pausing to admire the soaring skyline of Manhattan across the harbor from one of the northeast windows, then I sat quietly on a wooden bench and felt my grandfather very close to me. While I felt his uncertainty, I

***I WALKED THE ROOM'S LENGTH, PAUSING TO ADMIRE THE SOARING SKYLINE OF MANHATTAN ACROSS THE HARBOR***

***FROM ONE OF THE NORTHEAST WINDOWS, THEN I SAT QUIETLY ON A WOODEN BENCH AND FELT MY GRANDFATHER VERY CLOSE TO ME. WHILE I FELT HIS UNCERTAINTY, I FELT SOMETHING ELSE AS WELL . . . I FELT HIS DETERMINATION.***

felt something else as well, a thing he shared with the countless others who waited in this room. I felt his determination. Giuseppe, and the rest of them, had risked everything for a chance to make a new life, and they would not squander it. Their families depended on them. They would move heaven and earth if they had to.

When the ferry drops them in Jersey City, the four young Abruzzese find that train tickets will eat up much of their cash. They are also told, to their horror, that Harrisburg is roughly 150 miles away.

An exceptionally cold week later they present themselves to the hiring foreman at Harrisburg's handsome red brick Pennsylvania Railroad station. Speaking through an interpreter, he asks how they got themselves there since he didn't see any of them debark from a train. He discovers that they walked.

**ELLIS ISLAND IS ACTUALLY NOT A SINGLE ISLAND, BUT THREE MOSTLY ARTIFICIAL landforms joined by causeways, created with rock and fill from the mainland and ship's ballast. The main building is on Island 1, surrounded by structures that supported the immediate needs of the arrivals. A couple of these have been rehabilitated, put into use as administrative buildings. Across the ferry slip to the south, on Islands 2 and 3, is the hospital complex—also known as the South Side—a vast array of buildings that has changed little since the facility closed. They contain within them one of the saddest and most compelling chapters of the immigrant's story.**

**Left: A Greek family just off the boat in 1925. Right: Curved to slow the spread of bacteria, a south side corridor leads from the island's hospital to the measles ward.**











#### CONTAGION SOMETIMES FOUND A HOME IN THE CROWDED THIRD CLASS

sections of ocean liners, with new arrivals debarking on Ellis Island with measles, tuberculosis, influenza, ringworm, and a variety of other ailments. Others left their ports of departure with any number of health or medical conditions ranging from pregnancy to injuries to mental illness. Anyone identified by medical inspectors as unhealthy upon arrival would not be allowed to enter the country and would find themselves in the hospital complex. Here they were cared for in what was, in its day, a state-of-the-art complex. The care was good, but the patients awaited an unknown fate. The language barriers produced fearful uncertainty. Spouses could be disjoined, and terrified children could be separated from parents. Some recovered and were allowed to enter the United States. Some were deported back to their port of origin. Some died. More than a few were actually born there. In a place full of hope for a better life, the hospital buildings were islands of both sorrow and redemption.

A sense of both is evoked in the remarkable images by Stephen Wilkes—featured in this article—who photographed the complex for his book *Ellis Island: Ghosts of Freedom*. His haunting portraits, created in a series of visits between 1998 and 2003, are astonishing. A long, empty hallway draws the viewer with its beckoning glow. A room in the psychiatric hospital is filled with quiet anticipation. The massive steel door of a long silent autoclave in the tuberculosis ward comes to fiery life with an autumn sunset.

When I spoke with Wilkes, it was obvious that the images were a labor of love. “I wasn’t working with a grant or funding, and I certainly had no intention of doing a book,” he says. “But the place had such a broad and deep power.” Architectural photography often involves careful staging, the manipulation of artificial light, and many exposures. But Wilkes’s approach was anything but conventional, dictated for the most part by his subject. “I’d never done architectural photography before,” said Wilkes, “but these never really seemed like static subjects. You could feel an energy that was very much like street photography. When you’re photographing people on the street, you can look at them and know immediately whether it’s okay to photograph them or not. I felt that here.”

For his image of the administration office, Wilkes “walked into the room, and a shaft of sunlight was illuminating a single shoe left on a wooden table. It probably had been sitting there since the ’40s. I immediately took the shot. Later, after repeated visits, I discovered that the room only received direct sunlight for a brief instant every day, and I had just happened to walk in there at precisely the right moment!” According to Wilkes, “three or four shots was a big day.” The book, and a traveling exhibit, have had wide and popular exposure, and many people have reached out to Wilkes with personal stories. “The images always seem to make people want to talk, especially about their families and experiences. There’s something about the place that seems to connect.”



*MILLIONS VISIT ELLIS ISLAND EACH YEAR, PILGRIMS TO A PLACE SIGNIFICANT TO ALL OF US. HERE THE CHILDREN OF ITALY AND IRELAND AND POLAND AND RUSSIA AND TURKEY AND BERMUDA AND HUNDREDS OF OTHER PLACES LEFT THEIR OLD SELVES BEHIND. THESE SELVES ARE STILL, IN SOME SENSE, PRESENT.*

And indeed there is. Millions visit Ellis Island each year, pilgrims to a place significant to all of us. Here the children of Italy and Ireland and Poland and Russia and Turkey and Bermuda and hundreds of other places left their old selves behind. These selves are still, in some sense, present. “I certainly felt them whenever I was there,” Wilkes says. “Even though the complex was abandoned and overgrown, and I was often alone, there was always a palpable sense of humanity.”

Like a surprising number of immigrants, Giuseppe passed through the center more than once. When he came through the second time in 1920, he was 32, and a very different man.

HE HAD RETURNED HOME IN 1914 TO FINALIZE HIS FAMILY’S AFFAIRS, AND bring his wife Maria and daughter Nicoletta to the new world where he had found the hoped-for job with the railroad. But he arrived at the beginning of the Great War. When he landed in Naples the Italian government seized his passport. A few weeks later, at home in his village, the Carabinieri came and took him away. He was drafted into the army.

**Left:** Probably there for over half a century, a forlorn shoe sits on a table in the administration office on Island 3. Wilkes captured this image at exactly 3:15 pm, the only time of day when the room receives direct sunlight. **Top:** The author’s mother, Giulia Bianca DiRado, was eight years old when this c. 1927 passport photo was taken for her journey to America. **Middle:** The author’s Italian grandfather, Giuseppe Antonio DiRado. **Bottom:** Giuseppe in the 1930s as a trackman for the Pennsylvania Railroad.

ABOVE DIRADO FAMILY

He was assigned to an artillery battery, where this sensitive, literate, and unassuming man descended into a world of unimaginable violence amidst the jagged and bitterly cold mountains that separate what are now Italy, Slovenia, and Austria. He was unable to speak about it until he was an old man, and even then it sometimes shook him with tears.

So he came back to Ellis Island, to Pennsylvania and the railroad. Economic considerations forced him to leave behind a family that had grown to three children. He would send for them when he had money for passage. He brought with him a silent fury at the injustice visited by

the government of his native land. This time, he did not lean on the railing of the ferry. There was instead the ramrod straight bearing of a soldier. The uncertain young man of 1911 was gone. He promised himself he would never live where law-abiding men could be torn from their families without appeal or redress. He was very sure of his future; he was his own man now. While it would be six years before he took an oath of citizenship, Giuseppe was already an American.

**THE FUTURE OF THE YET-TO-BE RESTORED** structures on Ellis Island can be glimpsed in a proposed plan that is breathtaking in scope. The plan provides for the restoration of the 30 remaining structures, and the establishment of a home for the Ellis

Island Institute, the educational arm of Save Ellis Island, a nonprofit partner formed in 2000 to support the rehabilitation of the remaining buildings. According to Save Ellis Island, the institute is envisioned as “an active learning center with a mission to use the evocative power of place on Ellis Island to promote public understanding of the issues surrounding the global migration of peoples . . .” The restored buildings will offer conference space, overnight accommodations, and educational facilities for researchers, teachers, students, community leaders, and elected officials to share and learn from others.

For years, Save Ellis Island has raised funds and support for Ellis Island’s South Side, recently spearheading a national awareness campaign to make the rehabilitation a reality. This includes “We Are Ellis Island,” a web-based collection of personal vignettes by the descendants of immigrants and public service announcements by Olympic swimmer Michael Phelps during the 2008 games in Beijing, among other things. The Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation has raised funds for a \$20 million project, “The Peopling of America,” to encompass the stories of immigration and citizenship.



BETTMAN/CORBIS

**Left: An Italian immigrant and her three children in 1905. Right: The hospital morgue, on Island 3. In addition to serving as a storage area for deceased patients, the room was also used for autopsies and as an observation area for doctors and medical students studying contagious diseases.**

It is a future bright with promise. “Right now, most of the structures are stabilized and environmental issues like lead paint and asbestos are largely abated,” says John Hnedak, the national monument’s deputy superintendent. “With the buildings sealed up and with good roofs on them, they’ll be stable while we continue the planning.” John knows that much heavy lifting is still ahead, however. “We’re now studying the economic feasibility of the project, and we’ll soon have a much better sense of what the ultimate costs will be and how long the implementation will take. Save Ellis Island is doing a feasibility study to determine the likelihood of securing enough private-sector funds for the project. Final implementation is certainly years away.”

There have already been some successes, however. The park and Save Ellis Island have restored the Ferry Building with a combination of government and private funds, and work continues on the rehabilitation of an important hospital outbuilding. The ferry itself is about to be removed, its significant components salvaged and conserved.

*ANYONE IDENTIFIED BY MEDICAL INSPECTORS AS UNHEALTHY WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO ENTER THE COUNTRY . . . SOME RECOVERED AND WERE ALLOWED TO ENTER THE UNITED STATES. SOME WERE DEPORTED BACK TO THEIR PORT OF ORIGIN. SOME DIED . . . IN A PLACE FULL OF HOPE FOR A BETTER LIFE, THE HOSPITAL BUILDINGS WERE ISLANDS OF BOTH SORROW AND REDEMPTION.*

The double-ended, two-deck vessel is deeply connected to the story of the immigration station. When the facility closed, she remained floating at her mooring before finally succumbing to the elements. The sunken vessel was the subject of an intensive archeological investigation by the National Park Service Submerged Resources Center. Dave Conlin, the center’s deputy chief, helped direct the investigations, and proudly notes that the project went so well that “she’s now one of the best documented wrecks on the East Coast!”

For Dave, the ferry holds an important place in the story. “That ride on the ferry was the last touch of the bureaucratic process the immigrants felt before arriving in their new home. If you can imagine what they must have felt aboard her, you can understand that the history and archeology can help convey the essential emotional experience.”

When the conceptual plan is finally implemented, and the institute begins its mission of education, a new era will begin on Ellis Island.











**THE ITALIANS HAVE A WORD WITH NO DIRECT ENGLISH CORRELATE: GENTILE.**

It conveys a sense of decency, kindness, grace and, yes, gentility, but not the kind acquired with money. In the spring I'd been to the place Giuseppe left behind, along with much of my extended family. It's still a tiny village that doesn't see many tourists. The people there, and the place itself, are *molto gentile*. We met distant relatives and were made welcome. We were regaled with family stories, shown the sites, and ate very well. We left photographs of Giuseppe and his family behind at the "new church," built in 1908, where my mother Giulia was baptized in 1918. She once told me that her most vivid childhood memory of the village was of a landscape of great beauty where the eye could flow from snowcapped mountains down to the sea. In a quiet moment away from my family I found myself behind the "old church" where Giuseppe and Maria were married. Built in the mid-16th century, it perches on the crest of a hill at the edge of the village, affording a magnificent view. From this vantage I saw the world through my mother's eyes. To my left was the soft green Adriatic, and my gaze followed a small river up from the sea westward to the great snowy massif of the central Apennines. Soft hillsides of olives and grapes flanked the river, and the air was filled with bird song. Like almost every other family that passed through Ellis Island, Giuseppe's came to America propelled by grinding poverty and political inequity. I knew that. As I drank in the sweet beauty of the Abruzzo, I learned something about my family I didn't know. I knew to a certainty that leaving this place had broken their hearts.

We are a people in the throes of a debate about immigration, a people who mostly came here from somewhere else. Immigration is at the heart of our saga. As a place of learning and intellectual exchange, Ellis Island may again become a place that changes us, a beacon against the darkness of ignorance, bigotry, and anger. It may help point the way as we wrestle with our response to new waves of strangers. It will continue to remind us where we came from, and tell us who we are.

**ON THE MORNING AFTER MEMORIAL DAY, 1927, GIUSEPPE, NOW JOE TO HIS coworkers,** waits anxiously in a crowd on a Jersey City wharf as the ferry extends her gangway. This arrival is not as he planned. Aboard the ferry are his three children, but not his wife.

With the passage of the Quota Law in 1921 and the National Origins Act in 1924, limitations were placed on immigrants as Americans reacted with fear to the waves of strangers whose voices and looks differed from those of the northern Europeans who came earlier. Giuseppe suffered for this prejudice. Despite a frantic trip back to Italy in 1924, and a meeting with the American consulate in Rome, only three members of his family received permission to emigrate. So Maria took her children to Naples, entrusted them to the wife of a friend who was also sailing to America (and who would break her promise to watch them onboard) and kissed them goodbye. She would not see them again for a decade, when she was finally granted a visa.

RIGHT TOP FPG/GETTY IMAGES, RIGHT BOTTOM BETTMANN/CORBIS

**Left: A mirror in the tuberculosis ward reflects a lonely view of the Statue of Liberty. As photographer Wilkes notes in his book, for some patients that reflection was the closest taste of freedom they ever got. Below: An immigrant family looks across the New York Harbor at Lady Liberty. Bottom: Immigrant children on a window ledge in a circa 1920 photograph.**

Giuseppe watches the passengers stream down the gangway as he strains to glimpse the faces he has not seen in three years. After long moments he spies a tall and lovely 16-year-old girl with his wife's beautiful eyes, just as she sees him. They make their way to each other through the throng, and he finds Nicoletta holding hands with Antonio, now a boy of 11 bouncing along with the joy and mischief he would display throughout his life, and with a small and very quiet 8-



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year-old girl who looks like she's been crying. He has not seen Giulia since she was five, and she doesn't remember him very well, holding back behind her sister's skirts. Giuseppe can be reserved and even awkward around children, but he squats down and extends his arms, and she slowly comes forward, still sniffing. As he embraces her, she tentatively puts her arms around his neck, then

squeezes tight, and through his own tears he whispers in her ear "Benvenuto in America."

*Per Giuseppe, Maria, Nicoletta, Tonino, e especially per Giulia.*

For information on the Ellis Island Institute and the management plan, contact John Hnedak at [john\\_hnedak@nps.gov](mailto:john_hnedak@nps.gov). For information on Stephen Wilkes' images, go to [www.ellislandghosts.com](http://www.ellislandghosts.com). Joe Baker, an archeologist and writer in Pennsylvania, can be reached at [joebear81@comcast.net](mailto:joebear81@comcast.net).

# Heritage for the WORLD

EXHIBITING THE EMBLEMS OF AMERICA BY JOE FLANAGAN

They are spectacular places, most of them instantly recognizable the world over. They are natural landmarks, human creations of exceptional beauty, places of inspiration, and memorials to enduring ideals. Their resonance is distinctly American: Yellowstone, the Everglades, the Statue of Liberty. Captured in photographs at the U.S. Department of the Interior Museum in Washington, DC, they are lit like precious art in an atmosphere of gravity and reverence, their significance so profound they have been enshrined as world heritage sites, places that transcend boundaries. That recognition, created under the auspices of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, just celebrated its 30th anniversary, the occasion for the exhibit, whose images are among those shown here with photographs from the National Park Service Historic American Buildings Survey. It is a distinction that has been bestowed on 878 places in 145 countries; 20 are in the United States, 17 are national parks.

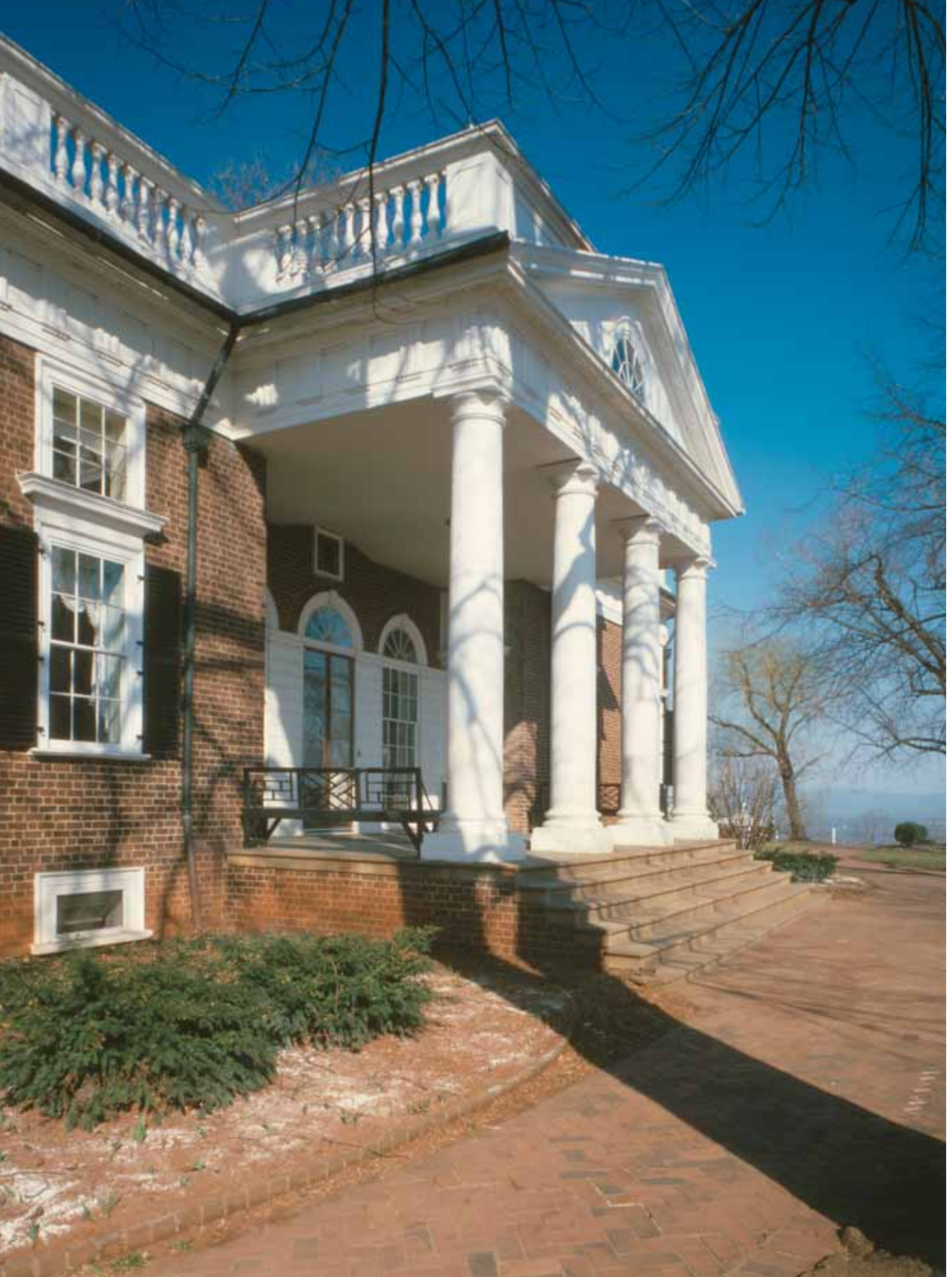
**Right:** Among America's most recognizable symbols, the Statue of Liberty, shown during its 1980s restoration, one of the most successful partnership projects in the history of the National Park Service. The NPS Historic American Buildings Survey and Historic American Engineering Record have both played pivotal roles in documenting the site for posterity, with evocative large format photographs featured in a *Life* magazine special issue and state-of-the-art 3-D laser scans done with Texas Tech University.





JET LOWE/NPS/HAER







**NOT FAR FROM THE CRUDE TIDEWATER SETTLEMENT THAT SAW THE FIRST** stirrings of a nation, Thomas Jefferson's Monticello perches atop a hill in the Virginia Piedmont. Like many U.S. world heritage sites, it is an American icon, reflecting the founding father's restless intellect as he designed, altered, and refined it over the years. Together with the University of Virginia's historic core, which Jefferson also designed, Monticello embodied his influential ideals, its neoclassical architecture one of the tools he used to establish a utopian vision for civilization in the New World. The young republic, and the affinity for the classical so evident at Monticello, found its inspiration in the democratic ideals of ancient Greece. Today, it is a symbol that speaks to people everywhere.

The world heritage list was conceived in the 1960s in part to promote the American ideal of conservation. The international treaty that established the global landmarks, called the World Heritage Convention, was adopted by UNESCO in 1972. But the seeds of the movement can be traced to a seminal event in 1959, with the construction of Egypt's Aswan High Dam. The project was to flood the valley of the Abu Simbel temples, ancient relics of Egyptian civilization. UNESCO launched an international effort—at the request of Egypt and Sudan—to save them. Archeologists and preservation specialists from all over the world conducted emergency investigations and, with financial support from the international community, the temples were dismantled, moved to higher ground, and reconstructed.

In the late '50s, much of the world was in the throes of a postwar boom. In America, urban renewal was starting to lay waste to large swaths of historic cities. Preservation as we know it today was taking its first faltering steps, in the face of great odds. The rescue of Abu Simbel sowed the idea of human heritage as a legacy for the planet.

**SYMBOLIZING THE GRANDEUR OF THE AMERICAN WILDERNESS, YOSEMITE** occupies a privileged place among the crown jewels of American parks, drawing visitors from all over the world. Thousands of years ago, glaciers carved much of the landscape, exposing the underlying granite that accounts for much of its stunning beauty. The Yosemite Valley, a former lake bed once filled with glacial melt, is today an open expanse with flowering meadows and quintessential western vistas. Giant sequoia groves, lakes, and waterfalls are part of a 1,169-square-mile preserve, 95 percent of it designated wilderness. The valley was both a geographical and a cultural boundary between the Native Americans of California and the Great Basin, its history evidenced by

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over a thousand archeological sites documented by the National Park Service. Yosemite's world heritage designation points out that it is home to almost all of the environments found in the Sierra Nevada Mountains. For its biodiversity, its unparalleled beauty, and its native state, Yosemite is considered an heirloom for the world.

The same is true for the Grand Canyon, which interpreter Chuck Waller says gets a large number of tourists from the Far East, where world heritage status has more cache. "Even if they've seen movies or postcards, the Grand Canyon is more—in a whole variety of ways—than what they expected." That is evident when he overhears their comments, he says. "It humbles people, because of the vastness."

**Left: The portico of Monticello, Thomas Jefferson's laboratory of architecture and ideas. The founding father's home, set in the bucolic Virginia countryside, continues to inspire people around the globe. Above: The essence of American wilderness, Yosemite is a wonder to people around the globe.**

LEFT JACK BOUCHER/NPS/HABS, ABOVE STAN JORSTAD

**AMONG AMERICAN CULTURAL SITES, THERE ARE FEW THAT CARRY THE** metaphoric weight of Philadelphia's Independence Hall. The structure's relative modesty, in the Georgian style then in vogue, speaks of a young nation's lack of pretense. The style suits the hall's original intent as the capitol of the sleepy province of Pennsylvania. But today the world sees it as the epicenter of modern democracy, the setting for the drama of the American Revolution, synonymous with the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and the U.S. Constitution. While its spire and symmetry suggest provincial efficiency, what happened inside ignited an eternal flame in the minds of people everywhere.

When the first world heritage sites were declared in the late 1970s, Independence Hall joined the pyramids of Giza, the palace and gardens at Versailles, and the Olduvai Gorge as sites that exceed the bounds of place and time. The World Heritage Committee, an independent body managed by UNESCO, selects the sites. Its 21 representatives—from the nations that have ratified the convention, advised by bodies such as the International Council on Monuments and Sites—define what constitutes the outstanding universal value of place.

The concept gained momentum in the wake of the Abu Simbel campaign. The idea of a "World Heritage Trust," discussed at a 1965 White House conference, continued to evolve through a series of meetings until a treaty—the World Heritage Convention—was forged. The United States was the first country to ratify it. By then, the idea had been shaped by the American experience with the national parks. The concept fused nature and culture, one often inte-

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heritage site in 1995, preserves the remnants of an inland sea that existed over 250 million years ago. The mountains were once part of a reef along the water's edge; today, fossils of snails, sponges, and other ocean life are abundant. The caverns, far below the Chihuahuan desert, are among the world's biggest and longest, with over a hundred in the park alone, their soft limestone eroded over millennia by water and naturally occurring sulfuric acid. This subterranean wonderland is an ecosystem unto itself, long the subject of research for its cornucopia of microorganisms, some with medical applications. The caverns are cultural, too, with a profusion of arche-

ological sites and cave paintings pointing to a human presence going back 12,000 years.

Sites like Carlsbad achieve international recognition only after submitting to "a very rigorous process" says Stephen Morris, chief of the National Park Service Office of International Affairs. Cultural candidates must be masterworks of human creativity or intelligence, places associated with the exchange of values and ideas, unique evidence of cultures that are endan-

gered or have disappeared, important examples of architectural or technological development, or sites directly linked to historic events or ideas. Natural landmarks must express stages of the earth's history, be out-

**Above:** There are few places on earth like Carlsbad Caverns National Park, whose subterranean world was formed out of an ancient salt water reef. **Right:** Unassuming on the outside, a country was born within; Independence Hall is a universal symbol of democracy. This 1959 image, one of the first in color taken for the Historic American Buildings Survey, was photographed by illustrious lensman Jack Boucher at the start of his National Park Service career, which just came to a close with his retirement.

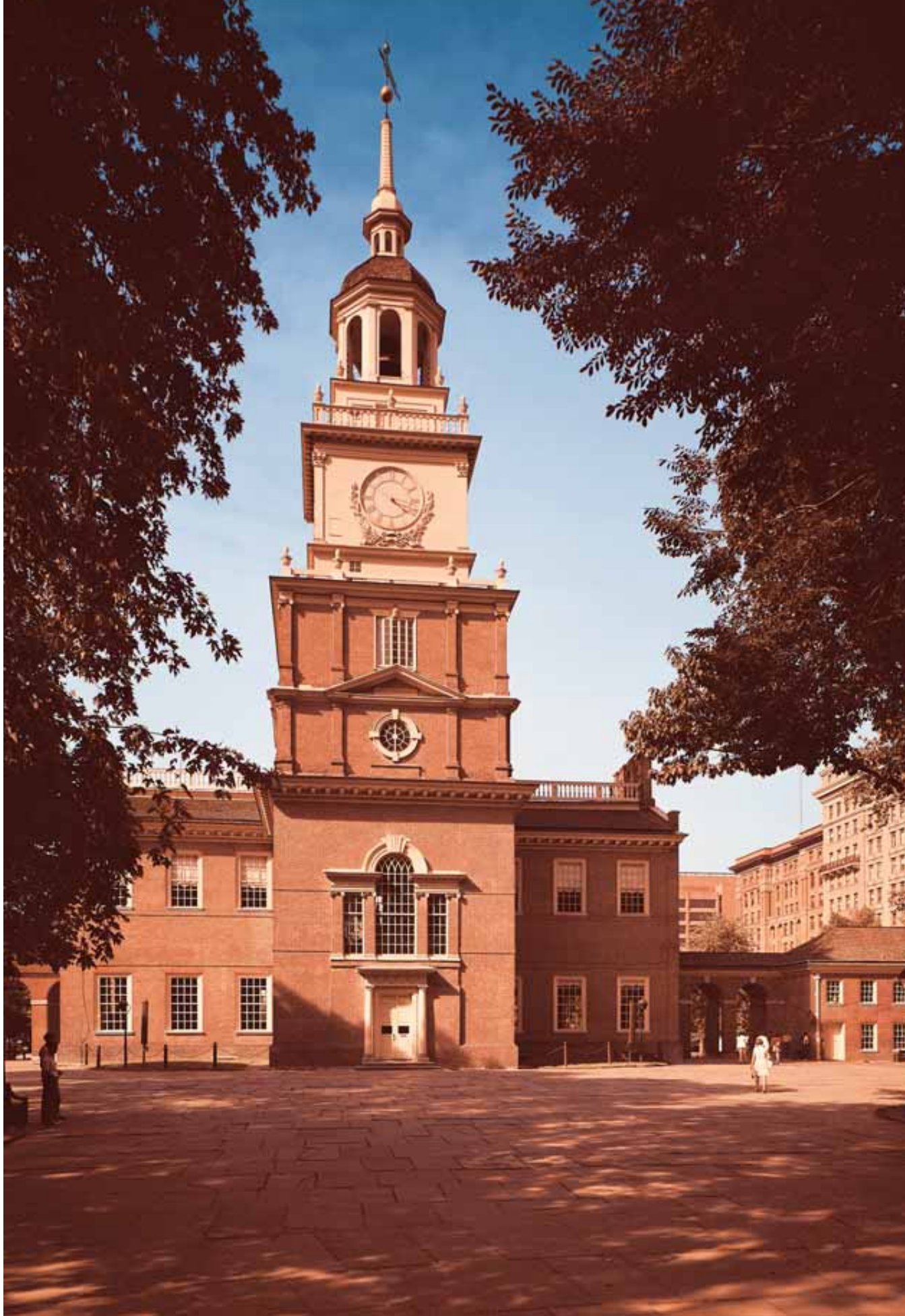
RIGHT JACK BOUCHER/NPS/HABS, ABOVE STAN JORSTAD

gral to the other, as expressed in a UNESCO document: "For a long time, nature and culture were perceived as opposing elements in that man was supposed to conquer a hostile nature, while culture symbolizes spiritual values . . . The cultural identity of different peoples has been forged in the environment in which they live and frequently, the most beautiful man-made works owe part of their beauty to natural surroundings."

New Mexico's Guadalupe Mountains illustrate the idea. It is the last place one would think of a large body of water, but evidence of it is everywhere. Carlsbad Caverns National Park, inscribed as a world













standing examples of ecological and biological processes, contain remarkable phenomena, or provide important habitat and diversity.

The recent candidate list illustrates a desire to broaden the reflection of the American experience, including places associated with the Civil Rights movement, the Wright Brothers' quest for flight, the ancient mound-building cultures, and buildings designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. This is in part to address what ICOMOS President Gustavo Araoz calls "an imbalance." He says that natural sites outnumber cultural by about three to one. "Natural sites," he says, "are felt by specialists to be somewhat finite. They have very specific categories—geological, biological, and so forth." The tendency is to check off a category once it is represented, like the perpetual lava of Hawaii Volcanoes National Park.

Cultural sites, such as San Juan National Historic Site, are not so easy to define. Sprawling across the rocky shore of Puerto Rico's north coast, the imposing medieval-looking edifice—a Spanish fortress that is over 400 years old—seems to have grown out of the turquoise waters like a reef. Seen from the air, its intent is obvious and sobering, a direct link with the complicated geopolitics of the 16th century. Both artifact and witness, the fort represents the European balance of power, the evolution of Caribbean culture, and the development of military technology. "Cultural sites are limitless," says Araoz. "We don't want to say there are x number of categories for them."

American involvement in the World Heritage Convention is officially handled by the Department of the Interior in cooperation with the State Department. The National Park Service provides technical and staff support. The U.S. committee of ICOMOS plays an advisory role upon request. The committee, made up of historic preservation organizations and individual specialists, promotes awareness and greater American participation in the convention. A federal interagency panel—with representatives from the National Park Service, the State Department, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Smithsonian, and others—also weighs in on issues.

The list's 30th anniversary marks a revitalization of U.S. participation, with a host of national parks nominated for inscription. The United States withdrew from UNESCO in the 1980s, but continued making nominations and sending delegates to meetings. In 2003, the United States renewed its commitment. Two years later, it was elected to the World Heritage Committee, which Morris describes as "very coveted." The recent election of Araoz as president of ICOMOS—the first American to hold the post—gives an additional boost to U.S. involvement. There is great excitement over the list of tentative sites, and 30th anniversary initiatives are bringing a new dynamism. Araoz points out the yet untapped potential of American cultural sites.

**Left: Detail of San Juan National Historic Site, an elaborate fort on the Puerto Rico coast that evokes the 16th-century Spanish empire. Below: Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, aglow with the geologic signature that earned its world heritage status.**

Among the stories he says could be shared are the history of the auto industry, space exploration, mining, and communications. "What has been suggested is to undertake a study of potential sites in every state—like the theme studies done by the U.S. National Historic Landmarks Program—to develop a thematic approach that will broadly represent our cultural heritage."



*THERE IS GREAT POTENTIAL IN WHAT ARAOZ CALLS THE "EXTRAORDINARY" MODEL OF THE NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA, WHERE ACROSS ENTIRE SWATHS OF AMERICA—FROM LOUISIANA'S CANE RIVER TO VIRGINIA'S SHENANDOAH VALLEY—ORAL TRADITIONS, PERFORMING ARTS, AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND CRAFTSMANSHIP ARE CELEBRATED AND PRESERVED ALONG WITH THE BUILT LEGACY AND THE CULTURAL LANDSCAPE. "THIS IS SOMETHING WE COULD TAKE TO AN INTERNATIONAL LEVEL," HE SAYS.*

There is great potential in what Araoz calls the “extraordinary” model of the national heritage area, where across entire swaths of America—from Louisiana’s Cane River to Virginia’s Shenandoah Valley—oral traditions, performing arts, and traditional knowledge and craftsmanship are celebrated and preserved along with the built legacy and the cultural landscape. “This is something we could take to an international level,” he says.

With the growth of global tourism, world heritage sites have soared in popularity, presenting a great opportunity. This sometimes has a price for both fragile sites and their communities. Many places simply do not have the infrastructure to accommodate tourists. The economic ramifications can be socially and environmentally disruptive.

The World Heritage Alliance, established by the United Nations Foundation and Expedia, “is trying to bring the tourist industry on board with the concept of world heritage and what it means,” says Morris. “But it is also trying to make some of the benefits of tourism available to communities so they’ll have a vested interest in preserv-

**WITH ITS VISUAL DRAMA AND 700 YEARS OF NATIVE AMERICAN LIFE, MESA VERDE WAS THE FIRST AMERICAN CULTURAL SITE INSCRIBED ON THE WORLD HERITAGE LIST. IT ALSO REMAINS ONE OF THE MOST FRAGILE.**

National Park are part of a pilot program with the World Heritage Alliance in which the parks conduct focus groups and carry out training and outreach with the tourism industry. These efforts promote both the importance and the fragility of the sites, helping to spread the message to the ever-growing traveling public.

The architects of the World Heritage Convention may not have known how prescient their vision would be 30 years into the future. While technology has made the world smaller, its differences appear starker and more irreconcilable than ever, and crisis—political, economic, environmental—seems a natural feature of the international landscape.

The idea of a common history—the heritage of humanity itself—is unifying, ultimately healing, and as enduring as the places we honor.

For more information, visit the World Heritage web site at <http://whc.unesco.org/>. For more on the National Park Service and its work with world heritage, go to [www.nps.gov/oia/topics/worldheritage/worldheritage.htm](http://www.nps.gov/oia/topics/worldheritage/worldheritage.htm). The exhibit “World Heritage Sites in the USA: A Thirtieth Anniversary Celebration” is on display at the U.S. Department of the Interior Museum until February 6. For more information, contact Hunter Hollins at (202) 208-4659, email [hunter\\_hollins@nps.gov](mailto:hunter_hollins@nps.gov). A host of U.S. world heritage sites are featured in the National Park Service Teaching with Historic Places series of lesson plans, online at [www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel](http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel).

**Above: Among the royalty of American places, Yellowstone National Park has captured the imagination of the world. Right: The cliff dwellings of Mesa Verde National Park in southwestern Colorado, one of the most compelling artifacts of early America.**



ing the sites.” The Mesa Verde cliff dwellings, in southwest Colorado’s remote tablelands, embody both the problem and the promise. The sight of them, carved into the wall of a vast canyon at the end of a winding road over endless flatland, simply amazes. It amazed the two cowboys who happened on it in 1888, tracking lost cattle through the snow, and it renders visitors the world over speechless in any language. With its visual drama and 700 years of Native American life, Mesa Verde was the first American cultural site inscribed on the world heritage list. It also remains one of the most fragile.

“Geotourism”—responsible travel that protects sense of place while providing financial incentive for preservation—is the goal of a partnership among the National Park Service Office of International Affairs, the National Geographic Society, the U.N. Foundation, and Expedia. Through its promotional brochure, “12 Things to Know About Your World Heritage,” National Geographic promotes hiring local guides, patronizing local establishments, and respecting the environment. Expedia donates profits from trips booked through its website to the Friends of World Heritage Fund. Hawaii Volcanoes National Park, San Juan National Historic Site, and Everglades







## ARTI FACT

# MEDIEVAL VISION

**IN THE ROLLING COUNTRYSIDE OUTSIDE** Philadelphia, the neo-Romanesque mansion appears like a vision from medieval Europe. Glencairn, part of a religious community that established itself here in the late 19th century, is one of the rarest buildings in the nation. **PENNSYLVANIA INDUSTRIALIST** John Pitcairn, a prominent member of a Christian denomination known as the New Church, bankrolled what would come to be known as Bryn Athyn—three massive residences for his extended family, one of them Glencairn, plus a cathedral—in one of the most unique building projects in American history. **ACCORDING TO THE NOMINATION** for the recently declared national historic landmark district, Bryn Athyn “comprises an exceptional and enduring essay of the American Arts and Crafts Movement.” While the Gothic and Romanesque are very much part of the buildings’ imposing presence, the arts and crafts vision predominates. **THE PROCESS THAT YIELDED** the masterworks is no less remarkable than the end product. The project created its own medieval guild system, convening a small army of skilled masons, carpenters, metal fabricators, and glassmakers who would exercise their creativity and work outside the confines of blueprints. Plans were eschewed for improvisation. **GLENCAIRN TOOK SHAPE** an inspiration at a time. Built between 1927 and 1938, it has more than 100 rooms on 11 floors, rich with handcarved woodwork, elaborate tile mosaics, and stained glass. Today it is a museum dedicated to the history of religion, exhibiting art and artifacts from a wide variety of cultures. **READ THE NHL NOMINATION ONLINE** at [www.nps.gov/history/nhl/designations/samples/pa/BrynAthyn.pdf](http://www.nps.gov/history/nhl/designations/samples/pa/BrynAthyn.pdf).





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**The National Park Service preserves unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and values of the National Park System for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations. The Park Service cooperates with partners to extend the benefits of natural and cultural resource conservation and outdoor recreation throughout this country and the world.**

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